ForeWord Reviews

Honoring Those Who Paid the Price: Forgotten Voices from the Korean War

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A mere five years after the end of World War II, the United Sates stood on the verge of another world war. This new war was fraught with the possible use of the atom bomb not only by the Americans but possibly by the Russians had they chosen to get involved. A Time magazine article posed the questions, “Could Armageddon begin with so feeble a fanfare as the muffled Battle of Korea? Could the push-button war of the physicists start among the grass roots of a land where men had hardly caught up with Galileo?”

Preparedness of the American military had sunk from the heights of World War II as GIs had returned to finish their education, build their careers, and start families. The onset of the Korean War found the US military weak in numbers with outdated weaponry, often in disrepair.

Mills, inspired by a visit with his wife to Indiana’s Korean War Memorial in November 2000, has written a history of the Korean War from the perspective of those from Indiana who fought the War and families and friends of those who fought. Interviews with soldiers, family members and friends, newspaper articles, telegrams from the US military all have been woven into a historical profile of the war’s impact on the State of Indiana. Although focusing on one state’s purview this historical review will serve well anyone interested in Korean War History. The varying phases of the war, along with the mood in Indiana and the War’s aftermath are all vigorously explored.

The Korean War, so often glossed over in American History courses compared with America’s more visible involvement in World War II and later Vietnam, was hellish for those who fought and those who worried about them at home. Mills provides a perspective to the sacrifices called upon those from Indiana.

At first, one wonders why Mills decided to limit the Korean War's historical purview to the State of Indiana. Upon reading, however, the graphic accounts of a war that America's soldiers were ill equipped to fight (new recruits often found themselves on the front line of battles one week after joining the military, with no basic training, grossly outnumbered by the enemy, in arduous terrain, faced with extreme weather conditions and with arms that would often not work), the impact of the war on a small slice of America made the horrors of war that much more real.

John R. Selig